

CHURCHES
- Duxbury

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PHOTO/LAURA SINCLAIR

Duxbury First Parish Church Minister Catherine Cullen, Wendy Swanson & her daughter Siri, all of Duxbury, walk down Main Street in Kingston during their nine mile pilgrimage that started in Plymouth to the church in Duxbury.



Walkers gathered near the stone marker representing the site of the First Church in the Miles Standish Burial Grounds. It was the last stop on their pilgrimage to the First Parish Church of Duxbury.



Paul Frangillo of Duxbury stands on the stone that marks where the First Church stood in the Mile Standish Burial Grounds. Paul was part of the pilgrimage that made the journey from the First Parish Church in Plymouth to the First Parish Church in Duxbury.

Photos by Laura Sinclair



Walkers stand in front of the First Parish Church of Duxbury after completing their nine-mile pilgrimage that started from the First Parish Church in Plymouth.



The Rev. Dr. Peter J. Gomes, Plummer Professor of Christian Morals and Pusey Minister in the Memorial chapel at Harvard University delivered the sermon during the 375th birthday celebration of the First Parish Church of Duxbury.

375 years in eight hours

First Parish Church of Duxbury celebrates its establishment

By Andria Farrell
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The light sounds of hand bells chimed out the music of happy birthday at the end of the 375th birthday celebration of the First Parish Church of Duxbury on Sunday afternoon. Then, the voices of nearly 100 congregates, visitors and friends joined in with song as they paid tribute to first church that separated from the original colony congregation.

The celebration began at 10 a.m. on Sunday at the original congregation in Plymouth and continued up to Duxbury as approximately 40 parish-

ioners made the nine-mile trek from Plymouth to Duxbury, the same route the first settlers of Duxbury made every Sunday before the church in Duxbury was established. With one stop along the way for lunch at the First Parish Church of Kingston, parishioners chugged along to Duxbury, coming to rest at the site of the original First Parish Church to lay a ceremonial wreath on Miles Standish's gravesite. From there, the pilgrims and parishioners marched on to the First Parish Church of Duxbury for the birthday ceremony that began at 4 p.m.

Celebrators dressed in Pilgrim garb, or their Sunday best. They took part in traditional hymns, listened intently to the Rev. Catherine Cullen, minister for the Unitarian Universalist Church, guest preacher Rev. Peter Gomes and other guest speakers, as the service tried to replicate a traditional service during the Pilgrim times.

Gomes spoke about the journey from "Across the Bay," to establish a new colony and begin a new church. He spoke about the courage of the John and Pricilla Alden, Miles Standish and Elder Brewster, and about the brief disdain that was felt immediately following the separation. Now after 375 years of worship, the church is still strong, and still vibrant.

"Today we exercise the continuity of a great adventure of faith," he said.

Chairman of the Duxbury Board of Selectmen Andre Martecchini spoke about the impact the First Parish Church of Duxbury had on the town. Today, town government is about budgets, schools, town managers, Town Meetings, and committees, he said, but back then, they needed three things to establish a town — people, a meeting-house and a minister. For 200 years, until 1833, the town worshipped and

SEE FIRST PARISH PAGE 5

And ending in Duxbury

FROM ...AND ENDING, PAGE 1

"This celebration shows how important the church was in the founding of Duxbury," Martecchini said.

Cullen spoke about the difference in the church today and in the church 375 years ago,

which has now grown into a congregation used, not only by Duxbury, but by many surrounding communities, including Marshfield.

"Three hundred seventy-five years is a great span of time, but a speck in God's plan," Gomes said. The ancestors that

began this church are not to be forgotten, but "our goal is not to go backwards but forwards, and the only way forwards is forward."

"May God grant your future, that may be worthy of your past," Gomes said in conclusion.

"Three hundred seventy-five years is a great span of time, but a speck in God's plan,"

Peter Gomes

"They would probably roll over in their graves at the thought of a female minister," she said. "But even back then they were the broad minded and tolerate radical lefties of the English religious life."

Cullen spoke about the sacrifices and courage the men and women who crossed the bay made to establish a new settlement and start a new church,